

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) A The method of ~~claim 3~~ preventing comprehension of a printed document, the method comprising:

feeding a printed document into a device having a printing mechanism;

scanning the printed document to produce at least one of an image file or an electronic text file of the printed document;

wherein identifying, based upon the image file, the at least one target portion of the printed document via~~comprises~~determining, based upon the image file, a first text pattern of symbols in the image file of the printed document, the first pattern of symbols including a line spacing, a paragraph spacing, and a margin spacing of the printed document, wherein the symbols of the first pattern include at least one of characters or numerals; and

printing, via the printing mechanism, at least one obfuscation pattern onto the at least one target portion of the printed document wherein printing the at least one obfuscation pattern~~comprises~~via:

building the at least one obfuscation pattern as a second pattern of symbols configured to surround the first pattern of symbols to prevent comprehension of the first pattern of symbols of the printed document, wherein the second pattern of symbols is configured to occupy the line spacing between adjacent lines of the first pattern of symbols, to occupy the paragraph spacing between adjacent paragraphs of the first pattern of symbols, and to occupy the margin spacing of the first pattern of symbols; and

printing the second pattern of symbols on the printed document relative to the first pattern of symbols to prevent comprehension of the printed document;

shredding the printed document after printing the at least one obfuscation pattern onto the printed document; and
preventing reconstruction of the shredded printed document via the at least one obfuscation pattern.

7-8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A~~The~~ method of ~~claim 3~~preventing comprehension of a printed document, the method comprising:

feeding a printed document into a device having a printing mechanism;
scanning the printed document to produce at least one of an image file or an electronic text file of the printed document;

identifying, based upon the image file or the electronic text file, at least one target portion of the printed document, wherein the at least one target portion ~~of the printed document~~ comprises a whitespace portion of the printed document; ~~and~~

printing, via the printing mechanism, at least one obfuscation pattern onto the at least one target portion, to prevent comprehension of the printed document, via printing the at least one obfuscation pattern at the at least one target portion comprises at least one of:

selecting a negative image of at least one identified character of the printed document and printing the negative image about the at least one identified character of the printed document to produce a substantially uniform thickness of ink or toner for the combination of the at least one identified character and the negative image of the at least one identified character on the printed document, wherein the whitespace portion comprises an area surrounding the at least one identified character and defined by the printed negative image of the identified character;

randomly selecting characters and printing strings of the selected characters at randomly selected angles on the printed document; and

randomly selecting characters and printing the selected characters individually at angles rotated relative to existing characters of the printed document;

shredding the printed document after printing the at least one obfuscation pattern onto the

printed document; and

preventing reconstruction of the shredded printed document via the at least one obfuscation pattern.

10-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method of claim 3~~preventing comprehension of a printed document, the method comprising:~~

feeding a printed document into a device having a printing mechanism;

scanning the printed document to produce at least one of an image file or an electronic text file of the printed document;

identifying, based upon the one image file or the electronic text file, at least one target portion of the printed document, wherein the at least one target portion includes at least one whitespace portion of the printed document;

analyzing the electronic text file to determine a content of the printed document;
~~wherein the at least one target portion of the printed document comprises at least one whitespace portion of the printed document;~~

printing, via the printing mechanism, at least one obfuscation pattern onto the at least one target portion to prevent comprehension of the printed document via~~and printing the at least one obfuscation pattern comprises~~ at least one of:

randomly selecting a plurality of content-free words and printing the selected words in a non-grammatical order as the at least one obfuscation pattern in the at least one whitespace portion of the printed document with the selected words printed in at least one of a repeating pattern and a non-repeating pattern; and

selecting a plurality of content-free words and printing the selected words in a grammatical order as the at least one obfuscation pattern in at least one whitespace portion of the printed document;

shredding the printed document after printing the at least one obfuscation pattern onto the printed document; and

preventing reconstruction of the shredded printed document via the at least one

obfuscation pattern.

14. (Canceled)

15-25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing a method of obfuscating a printed document, the method comprising:

identifying at least one whitespace portion, at least one text portion, and at least one graphics portion of a printed document; and

manipulating at least one of a symbol pattern, a character pattern, a word pattern, a random pixel pattern, and an image pattern configured for over-printing onto the respective whitespace portion, the text portion, and the graphics portion of the printed document to prevent reconstruction of the over-printed document after shredding of the over-printed document, wherein:

manipulating the symbol pattern includes selecting a second pattern of symbol misinformation that confuses a first pattern of symbols of the printed document;

manipulating the character pattern includes selecting a plurality of characters for overprinting onto the at least one whitespace portion and the at least one text portion of the printed document;

manipulating the word pattern includes selecting a plurality of words, blackouts, and overstrike characters for overprinting onto the at least one whitespace portion and the at least one text portion to obfuscate natural language word groupings of the text portion of the printed document;

manipulating the pixel pattern includes selecting at least one of a plurality of individual pixels and a plurality of pixel clusters for overprinting onto the printed document; and

manipulating the image pattern includes selecting at least one of a blackout pattern and a confusing image pattern for overprinting onto the at least one graphic portion of the printed document to obfuscate the printed document.

27-28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 42 wherein printing the at least one obfuscation pattern comprises printing at least one character that complementarily obscures an identified character of the at least one target portion of the printed document and printing the at least one character as an overstrike onto the identified character of the printed document.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 46 wherein the at least one obfuscation pattern comprises two or more different obfuscation patterns.

31. (Canceled)

32. (New) The method of claim 9 wherein the at least one obfuscation pattern comprises two or more different obfuscation patterns.

33. (New) The method of claim 13 wherein the at least one obfuscation pattern comprises two or more different obfuscation patterns.

34. (Canceled)